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ITEM 5:* STATE OF THE ENVIRONMENT

UNEP FOLLOW-UP TO THE 1990 STATE-OF-THE-ENVIRONMENT REPORT: "CHILDREN AND THE ENVIRONMENT"

Report of the Executive Director

Note by the Secretariat

The present report on UNEP's activities in environmental education for children and in enhancing their environmental awareness, and UNEP's activities to enhance the environmental awareness and the active participation of women in environmental protection measures, for their health and well-being and for that of their children is submitted to the Governing Council for information as requested by the Council in its decision 16/15A.

Introduction

1. The Governing Council in its decision 16/15A, paragraphs 4 and 5, requested the Executive Director to accord high priority within the programme of the United Nations Environment Programme to activities related to the achievement of relevant goals and strategies enunciated in the World Declaration on the Survival, Protection and Development of Children and the Plan of Action for Implementing the World Declaration in the 1990s. In particular, priority should be given to: (i) Formal and informal environmental education of children; (ii) Programmes to enhance the environmental awareness of children; (iii) Programmes to enhance the environmental awareness and active participation of women in environmental protection measures for their health and well-being and for that of their children. The Governing Council further requested the Executive Director to include in his 1992 Annual Report material on the implementation of the action required by this decision. As the Annual Report is no longer issued as a Governing Council document 1/, the following constitutes the Executive Director's report to the Governing Council on the subject of follow-up to the 1990 State-of-the-Environment Report: "Children and the Environment".

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* Refers to the number of the item on the Provisional Agenda (UNEP/GC.17/1).

I. FORMAL AND INFORMAL ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION OF CHILDREN

2. UNEP's efforts in this field primarily involve the UNESCO/UNEP International Environmental Education Programme (IEEP). Under phase 8 of IEEP, which covers the period 1992-1993, UNESCO, as the main implementing agency for the Programme, is making efforts to improve and strengthen environmental education in schools. In this, UNESCO is receiving financial support from UNEP.

3. During 1990-1992, a typical biennium for IEEP, a number of meetings and seminars were convened for teachers and education administrators. These activities included: an international symposium/workshop; four consultation meetings (two international, one regional and one inter-agency); one subregional expert meeting; eight national seminars; 10 training seminars (four inter-regional, one subregional and five national). Within the same biennium, 20 national-level pilot projects were initiated and completed in addition to the development, and publication of two teaching guides and four issues of the IEEP newsletter CONNECT, for dissemination to focal points and interested people in over 80 countries. In addition, studies on the feasibility of including environmental education in the curricula of schools in Africa and India were completed, paving the way for the development of relevant environmental education programmes.

4. Under another IEEP activity, a pilot set of posters on UNEP's areas of concentration is being distributed. The posters are to guide curriculum developers, trainers and teachers of secondary school pupils over the next 2-4 years in introducing and teaching topics such as climate change; freshwater resources; protection and use of oceans and coastal areas; forests; desertification control; biological diversity; environmental effects of industry; and quality of life. After this initial period, the material will be updated.

II. PROGRAMMES TO ENHANCE THE ENVIRONMENTAL AWARENESS OF CHILDREN

5. Under UNEP's outreach programme to youth, and in partnership with the UNEP Regional Youth Focal Points and other youth groups, a great deal of effort has been made to enhance the environmental awareness of children. The major activities are listed in paragraph 6-17 below.

The Children's Alliance for Protection of the Environment (CAPE)

6. The Alliance is one of UNEP's Regional Youth Focal Points. One of its aims is to educate children about trees, plants, animals and the importance of forests to the health of human beings and our planet Earth. The CAPE Children's Rain Forest Preserve on the Osa Peninsula, Costa Rica, is an example of a project that pursues these aims.

7. CAPE publishes a quarterly newspaper, *Many Hands* written by children and distributed to children around the world, containing stories, poems and cartoons to describe their opinions, ideas and activities. CAPE has completed a 140-page, illustrated, action-oriented curriculum guide to assist parents, teachers and youth leaders in promoting environmental education and action among children.

8. UNEP has provided funding to assist CAPE in the implementation of the above programme on children and the environment.

Voice of the Children International Campaign

9. During the Regional Follow-up Conference to the 1987 Report, *Our Common Future*, organized by the World Commission on Environment and Development in Bergen, Norway, in May 1990, a Children's Hearing was held. Before an audience of 1,400 children and adults, 10 Norwegian children challenged some of Norway's top leaders on questions of environment and development. The hearing was a great success; both the children and the politicians felt that this had been an important event.

10. As a consequence, it was suggested that children all over the world should have a similar opportunity to be able to get in touch with top leaders in their own countries in order to be heard. To achieve that aim a Voice of the Children International Campaign was launched. It was implemented by the Norwegian Campaign for Environment and Development and the Environment Defence Foundation (FUNAM) of Argentina, with support and funding from UNEP. The purpose of the Campaign was to help organize public hearings for children in as many countries as possible all over the world, to encourage children to express their ideas and thoughts on environment and development, and to organize Children's Hearings where children themselves could voice their concern over the state of the environment where they live.

11. A representative group of 21 children from 19 countries of all regions was chosen to attend the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, held in Rio de Janeiro in June 1992. The Hearing that took place there was opened by street children from Rio, who made a lively presentation of their situation. The group spoke about the issues of poverty, education, war and military expenditures, pollution and environment in general. Each of the children had chosen the issue he or she wanted to raise and they all talked clearly and in strong terms about what was most important to them. Among those attending the Children's Hearing were NGOs, the media and the conference participants.

Scouts and Girl Guides

12. For the past few years, UNEP has been working successfully with the World Organization of the Scout Movement and the World Association of Girl Guides and Girl Scouts to help those organizations upgrade their environmental programmes. Those programmes reach out to Scouts and Girl Guides in more than 150 countries and territories representing over 30 million young people over the age of six. One landmark which underscores the partnership between the two organizations and UNEP was the publication of a training manual entitled *Scouting: Action for the Environment* and of *Water is Life: Protection of freshwater resources through action and by creating awareness among women, youth and children*. Three "Water activity" leaflets were produced to back up the training materials. Radio programmes based on the training kit were produced. A "water badge" was established by the Girl Guides and an "environment badge" by the Scouts.

13. At the World Scout Jamboree in the Republic of Korea in August 1991, UNEP organized highly promising new environmental activities in a training forum called the Global Development Village. This training activity will be replicated by the Scouts for future national, regional and World Jamborees.

GLOBAL 500 Youth Environment Award

14. A special, separate Global 500 Youth Environment Award programme was launched by the Executive Director of UNEP at the World Environment Day celebrations in Brazil in June 1992. Beginning in 1993, these awards will go to children and young people between six and 25 years of age who have

made outstanding contributions to the protection of the environment. The Global 500 Youth Environment Award, linked to UNEP's Global 500 Roll of Honour for Environmental Achievement, passes the torch to future generations and keeps alive the spirit of International Youth Year (1985), when UNEP's Environmental Agenda for Youth was established.

UNEP Goodwill Ambassador for Youth

15. UNEP has appointed singer, songwriter and author Raffi Cavoukian of Canada as UNEP Goodwill Ambassador with special responsibility for youth. Known to millions of fans as Raffi, the artist has dedicated his life and artistic career to encouraging sustainable living and environmental awareness amongst children. He has produced records with sales ranging from gold to triple platinum, concert videos, songbooks and picture books.

16. The explorer Robert Swan, appointed UNEP Goodwill Ambassador with special responsibility for youth activities in 1990, helped UNEP to develop the Global Youth Project, launched in 1991 to create environmental awareness among young people. In addition, he has developed educational packs on the environment.

III. PROGRAMMES TO ENHANCE THE ENVIRONMENTAL AWARENESS AND THE ACTIVE PARTICIPATION OF WOMEN IN ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION MEASURES FOR THEIR HEALTH AND WELL-BEING AND FOR THAT OF THEIR CHILDREN

17. UNEP has continued to implement its outreach programme to women. It is widely accepted that the effects of environmental deterioration are often first felt by women and that children are particularly vulnerable to environmental health problems. The thrust of UNEP's outreach programme to women is to enhance the environmental awareness and active participation of women in environmental protection and sustainable development. Although such a programme does not apply directly to children, the result is clearly an improvement for the entire community, including children.

18. The outreach programme to women primarily centres around the activities of UNEP's Senior Women Advisory Group on Sustainable Development (SWAGSD) and the network of the international NGO, WorldWIDE. With UNEP's support, regional women's assemblies were held throughout the world and in November 1991 the Global Assembly of Women and Environment was held in Miami, Florida. At the Global Assembly, which was attended by many women from throughout the world, 47 of the participants between the ages 18 and 25 and from 17 countries, presented the Statement of New Generation Leaders at the Assembly. Efforts are under way to create links between these young women and UNEP's Regional Youth Focal Points.

19. The results of the women's assemblies were conveyed to UNCED. As follow-up to those assemblies, regional seminars for women are being planned and convened in all regions of the world. Examples of such seminars include "Women in Environment" convened by IEEP, the All-India Women's Conference (AIWC), and the Pan-Pacific and South-East Asia Women's Association (PPSEAWA), (New Delhi, India, 4-6 March 1992); A seminar on "Environmental Education for Women", organized by IEEP, PPSEAWA International and its New Zealand Association, co-sponsored by the International Council of Women (Auckland, New Zealand, 7-8 April 1992). The main aims of those seminars were to formulate a holistic approach to sustainable development, keeping in view the interactive dilemma of poverty, environment and development; and to increase understanding of the conceptual issues related to population, consumption, environment, development and women.

20. Another UNEP activity of relevance in the present context comprised a series of workshops, held in 1989-1991, under the UNEP project for training networks on safe handling and use of pesticides for women groups' leaders in Thailand. Under the project, 150 leaders were trained who, in turn, transmitted their knowledge to a total of 27,018 Thai women about the dangers, use and management of toxic substances in the workplace and the home and about how to pass on such information to their families and communities. The workshops were implemented in five Thai provinces by the Thai Department of Non-Formal Education and the Foundation for Life-Long Education, in close collaboration with UNEP. As a result of the success of this project, in 1991 UNEP embarked on a similar exercise in four more countries of the Asia and the Pacific region: Malaysia; Papua New Guinea; Sri Lanka; and Viet Nam. Initial activities, such as the translation of manuals into local languages, identification of training centres, etc. have been completed.

Note

1/ Governing Council decision 16/5, paragraph 1 (b), of 31 May 1991.